Environmental concerns about exploitation of natural resources

326. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether eminent environmentalists have expressed concern over excessive and unscientific exploitation of natural resources in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have announced some programmes recently on the World environment Day to protect the depleting greens in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and what other steps Government propose to take toprotect the natural resources, which are depleting fastly in the country?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Harvesting of forests is permitted strictly as per the prescription of Working Plan prepared on the principle of substainable management. Ministry of Environment and Forests through Forest Survey of India, Dehradun has been assessing the forest cover in the country biennially since 1987. As per the State of Forests Report, 1999 prepared by Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, there is an increase in forest cover by 3896 sq. km. compared to the previous assessment.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. However, various measures have been undertaken for conservation and development of forests. The important ones are:

(i) Afforestation programmes are undertaken by States/UTs from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from the Government of India.

(ii) Externally aided projects are being implemented for development and preservation of forests.

(iii) Guidelines to all States/UTs to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests have been issued.

(iv) Ministry has prepared a National Forestry Action Plan to enhance the contribution of forestry and tree resources for ecological stability and people centered development through increased investments for conservation and development of forest resources.

(v) National guidelines for prevention and control of forest fire have been issued to all States/UTs.

Poaching in Chilka Lake

327. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the large scale killing of birds by poachers around Chilka Lake in Orissa;

(b) if so, the number of poachers apprehended during the last three years near the lake, year-wise; and

(c) the fresh steps taken/proposed by Government to wean away poachers from killing of birds around Chilka lake?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Instances of poaching of birds around Chilka Lake in Orissa have been reported from time to time.

(b) Number of poachers apprehended during the last three years *(i.e.* 1999-2000 to 2001 -2002) is given below:—

Year	Number of poachers apprehended
1999-2000	7
2000-01	6
2001-02	11

(c) Steps taken by the State Government to wean away the poachers from killing of birds around Chilka Lake with active support from ChHka Development Authrotiy, NGOs and local wildlife lovers are as foMows: